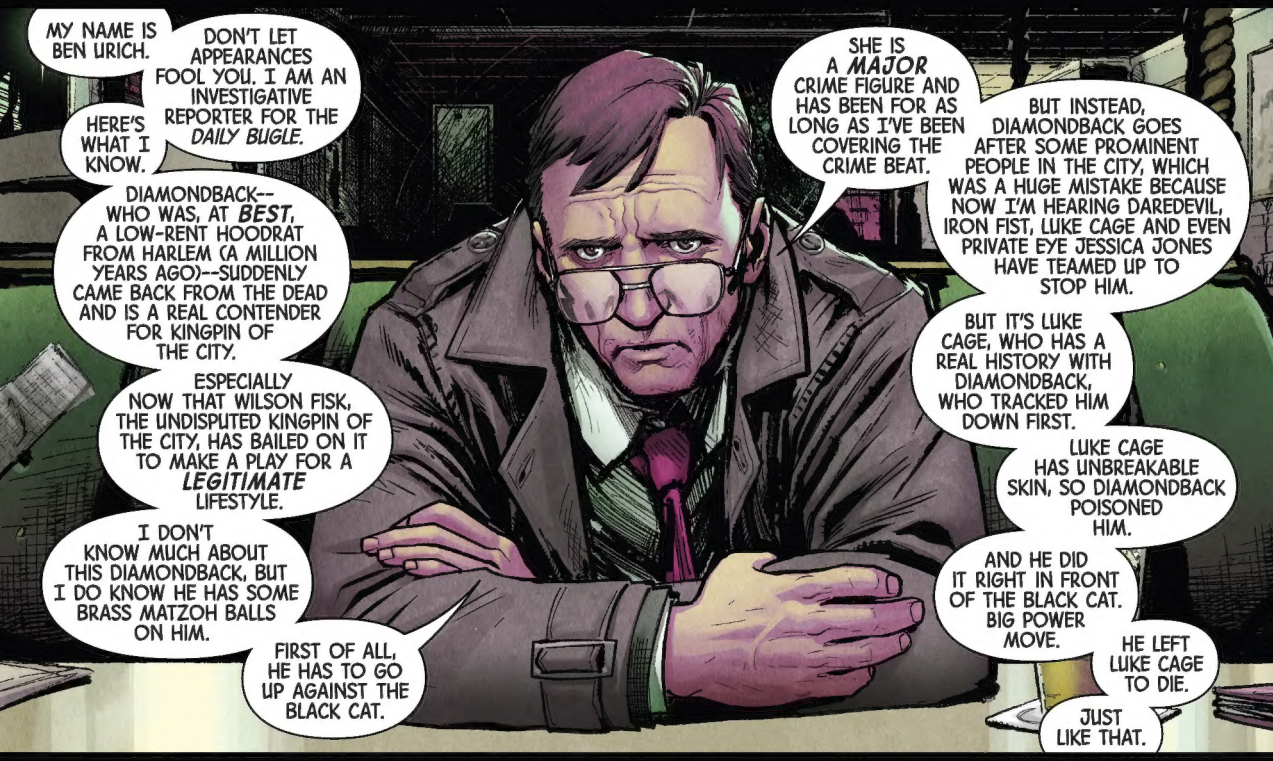
DAREDEVIL • LUKE CAGE • JESSICA JONES • IRON FIST

THE DEFENDERS™

BENDIS • MARQUEZ • PONSOR

MARVEL #2



THE DEFENDERS

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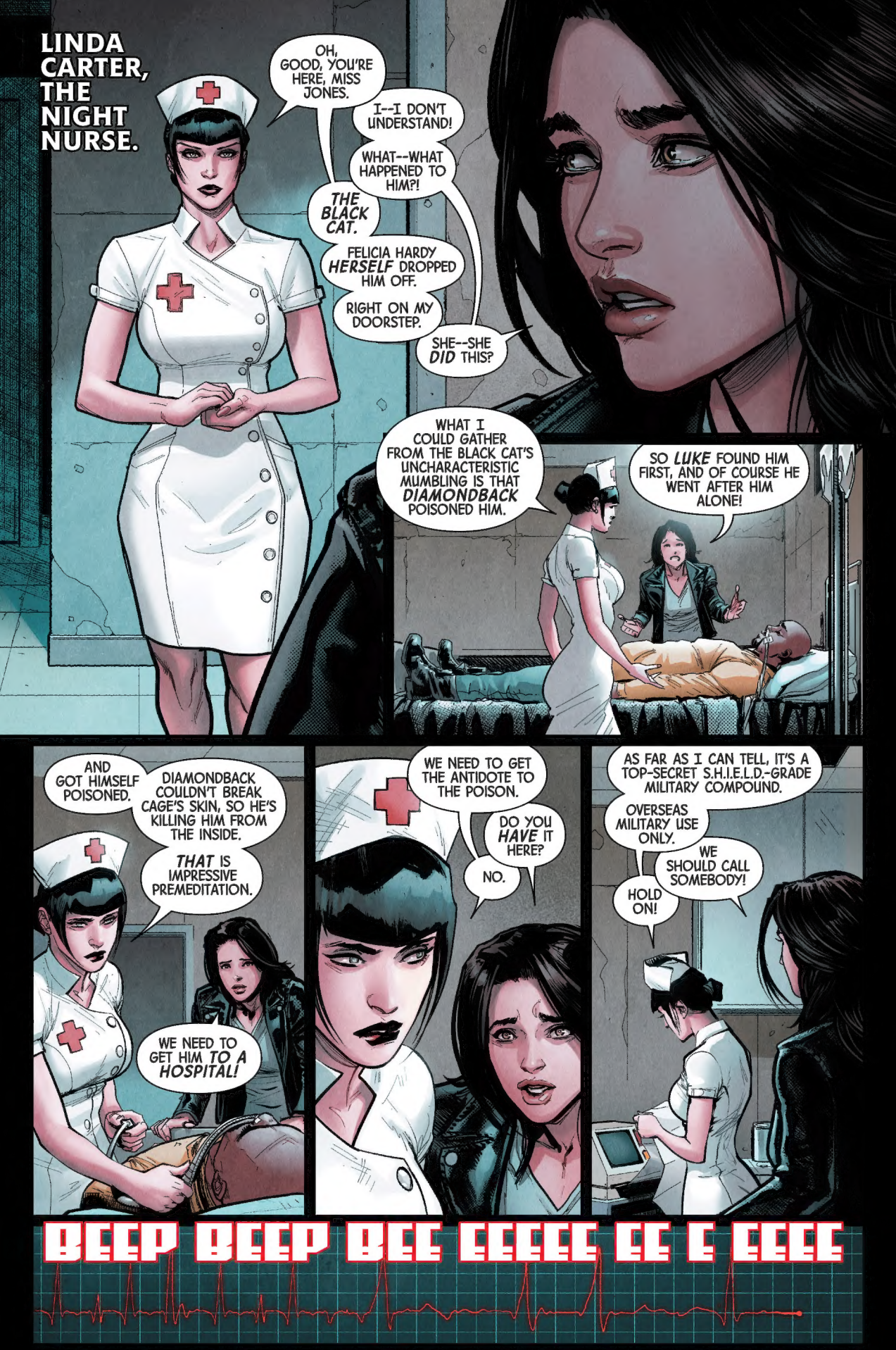
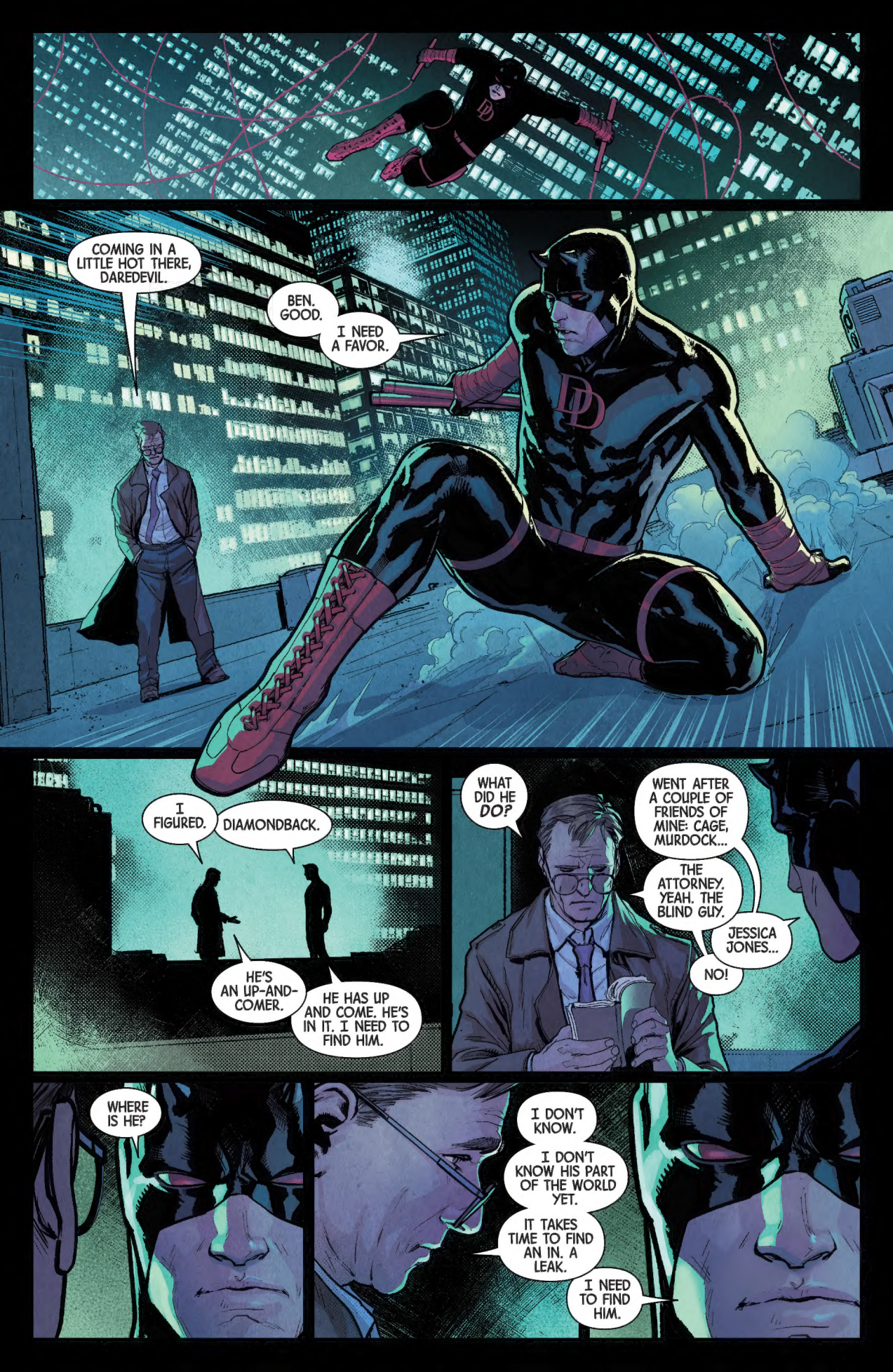
AGH!
JESSICA JONES.
OOF!
STUPID!
NIGHT MEDICAL CENTER
NO...
LUKE...


LINDA CARTER, THE NIGHT NURSE.
OH, GOOD, YOU'RE HERE, MISS JONES.
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WHAT--WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?!
THE BLACK CAT.
FELICIA HARDY HERSELF DROPPED HIM OFF.
RIGHT ON MY DOORSTEP.
SHE--SHE DID THIS?
WHAT I COULD GATHER FROM THE BLACK CAT'S UNCHARACTERISTIC MUMBLING IS THAT DIAMONDBACK POISONED HIM.
SO LUKE FOUND HIM FIRST, AND OF COURSE HE WENT AFTER HIM ALONE!
AND GOT HIMSELF POISONED.
DIAMONDBACK COULDN'T BREAK CAGE'S SKIN, SO HE'S KILLING HIM FROM THE INSIDE.
THAT IS IMPRESSIVE PREMEDITATION.
WE NEED TO GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL!
WE NEED TO GET THE ANTIDOTE TO THE POISON.
DO YOU HAVE IT HERE?
NO.
AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, IT'S A TOP-SECRET S.H.I.E.L.D.-GRADE MILITARY COMPOUND.
OVERSEAS MILITARY USE ONLY.
WE SHOULD CALL SOMEBODY!
HOLD ON!
BEEP BEEP BEE EEEEE EE E EEEE


COMING IN A LITTLE HOT THERE, DAREDEVIL.
BEN. GOOD.
I NEED A FAVOR.
I FIGURED.
DIAMONDBACK.
HE'S AN UP-AND-COMER.
HE HAS UP AND COME. HE'S IN IT. I NEED TO FIND HIM.
WHAT DID HE DO?
WENT AFTER A COUPLE OF FRIENDS OF MINE: CAGE, MURDOCK...
THE ATTORNEY. YEAH. THE BLIND GUY.
JESSICA JONES...
NO!
WHERE IS HE?
I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T KNOW HIS PART OF THE WORLD YET.
IT TAKES TIME TO FIND AN IN. A LEAK.
I NEED TO FIND HIM.

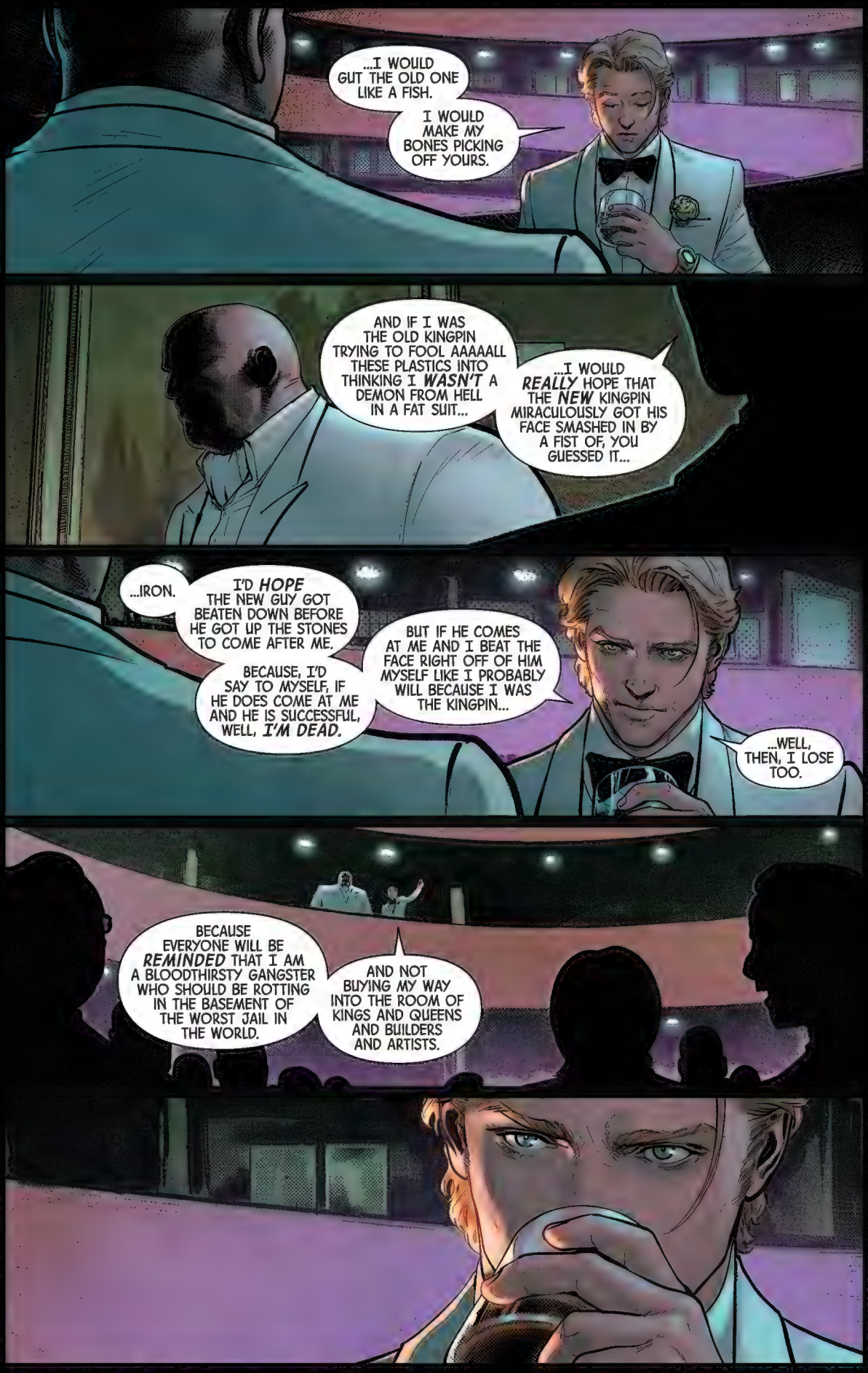
BEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEE
HELP ME UNPLUG HIM!
WHY?!
WE HAVE TO GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL!
YOU ARE AT A HOSPITAL!
IF MY HUSBAND DIES BECAUSE OF YOU, I WILL SERIOUSLY--
EXCUSE ME.
BEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEE
THIS SHOULD DO IT.
THANKS, BLADE.
HE HAS UNBREAKABLE SKIN!
THIS ISN'T A NEEDLE.
YOU NEED ME TO DO THAT?
&#%$!
I GOT IT!
CRACCK

PING
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE BEEP
IS--?
GOD, THAT WAS CLOSE.
IS THAT IT?
IS HE GOING TO BE OKAY?
BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
WELL!
CLAP
TELL YOUR HUSBAND HE OWES ME.
AGAIN.
I HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIS VITALS.
WE HAVE TO GET HIM TO A REAL, ACTUAL HOSPITAL.
HIS ORGANS COULD HAVE TURNED TO BUTTER!
IF THEY DID, THEY'RE FUNCTIONING REMARKABLY WELL.
I'M CALLING 9-1-1.
YOU KNOW WHAT WILL *HAPPEN* TO HIM THERE!
YOU KNOW WHAT THE POLICE PUT HIM THROUGH.
BUT HE'LL BE ALIVE!
BABE.

KEEP IT DOWN. I'M NAPPIN'.
HEY!
THANK YOU.
YOU LOVE ME...
OKAY.
I NEED ONE MORE FAVOR FROM YOU.
DIAMONDBACK.
WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?
YOU KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.
WHERE IS HE?
JONES...
YOU'RE PROTECTING HIM?
I'M PROTECTING THIS CLINIC.
IF I START DOLING OUT INFORMATION THAT CAN GET BACK TO ME AND THEN BACK TO WHOEVER MAY HAVE GIVEN IT TO ME AND WE ALL END UP DEAD...
...THEN THIS PLACE GOES UNDER AND PEOPLE LIKE YOUR HUSBAND WON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO!
LINDA, HE'S A BAD GUY.
YOU ARE NOT HEARING ME!
"THANK YOU!
"THANK YOU ALL!"

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM IN NYC.
THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TO THIS WONDERFUL EVENT.
WHEN I WAS ASKED TO GIVE THE TOAST TONIGHT, I WAS SO HONORED.
IF MY MOTHER COULD SEE ME HERE AMONG ALL OF YOU...
...YOU KINGS AND QUEENS, YOU BUILDERS AND ARTISTS...
...I LOOK OUT AT YOU AND I SAY THIS, RIGHT HERE, THIS IS WHAT MAKES NEW YORK THE GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD.
I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN ME AND DIG DEEP--LET'S GET THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC THE WORLD-CLASS CAMPUS IT DESERVES.
THANK YOU, MISTER FISK!
QUITE A MOMENT FOR YOU, WILSON...

...YOU ALMOST SOUNDED SINCERE.
I KNOW THE FACE.
YOU KNOW THE BOTTOM HALF MOSTLY.
DANNY RAND. RAND CORP.
IRON FIST.
I NEVER SEE YOU AT THESE TYPES OF THINGS.
BECAUSE I LITERALLY HATE THEM.
AND I DON'T HATE.
I'M CHI-FOCUSED LIKE THAT.
SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
DIAMONDBACK.
YES, I KNOW, YOU'RE A LEGITIMATE BUSINESSMAN OF GROWING ESTEEM.
WHY WOULD I KNOW?
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE KINGPIN. OOPS, I MEAN, WERE.
AND IF I DID...
...DO I REALLY HAVE TO FINISH THAT QUESTION?
YOU KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO IF I WAS LOOKING TO TAKE MY PLACE AS THE NEW KINGPIN...


...I WOULD GUT THE OLD ONE LIKE A FISH.
I WOULD MAKE MY BONES PICKING OFF YOURS.
AND IF I WAS THE OLD KINGPIN TRYING TO FOOL AAAAALL THESE PLASTICS INTO THINKING I WASN'T A DEMON FROM HELL IN A FAT SUIT...
...I WOULD REALLY HOPE THAT THE NEW KINGPIN MIRACULOUSLY GOT HIS FACE SMASHED IN BY A FIST OF, YOU GUESSED IT...
...IRON.
I'D HOPE THE NEW GUY GOT BEATEN DOWN BEFORE HE GOT UP THE STONES TO COME AFTER ME.
BECAUSE, I'D SAY TO MYSELF, IF HE DOES COME AT ME AND HE IS SUCCESSFUL, WELL, I'M DEAD.
BUT IF HE COMES AT ME AND I BEAT THE FACE RIGHT OFF OF HIM MYSELF LIKE I PROBABLY WILL BECAUSE I WAS THE KINGPIN...
...WELL, THEN, I LOSE TOO.
BECAUSE EVERYONE WILL BE REMINDED THAT I AM A BLOODTHIRSTY GANGSTER WHO SHOULD BE ROTTING IN THE BASEMENT OF THE WORST JAIL IN THE WORLD.
AND NOT BUYING MY WAY INTO THE ROOM OF KINGS AND QUEENS AND BUILDERS AND ARTISTS.

ULTIMATE
NOTHING?
NOTHING?
NOTHING ABOUT LUKE CAGE?
I AIN'T GOT NO REASON TO LIE TO YA, DIAMONDBACK.
I DID.
CHECK THE DAILY BUGLE.
I LEFT THE DUDE TO DIE.
SEE, YA NEVER LEAVE THEM TO DIE.
NO MATTER HOW BADASS IT FEELS TO LEAVE THEM LIKE YOU DON'T EVEN CARE TO STAY AND WATCH.
YA GOTTA STAY AND WATCH THE MOMENT.
MAYBE THE BLACK CAT DUMPED THE BODY.
MAYBE HE'S DEAD IN A DUMPSTER SOMEWHERE.
MAN, THE WAITING IS KILLING ME.
YEAH?
HEY!

HOPE THIS TAKES YOUR MIND OFF IT!!!
YOU PIECES OF CRAP BETTER AIM GOOD OR YOU AIN'T GETTIN' PAID THIS WEEK!
WHATEVER THIS IS--YOU'RE DONE!
PFFT!
GET OUT OF THE CITY! TONIGHT!
OR I WILL KEEP BREAKING YOUR NOSE UNTIL THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO BREAK!
DO NOT SHOOT.
I DON'T HAVE THE CLEANEST SHOT.
PUT HIM DOWN, LADY!
COUNTING TO THREE!

OOF!
SPING
OW!
SPONG
CRACK
@#$@#$!

CLUMP
PLUMP
IT'S OVER.
YOU DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU ARE--
SPOK

YEAH?
HI.
HI.
THANK YOU.
YEAH, NO PROBLEM.
WHACKK
NOT SO EASY WHEN YOU'RE NOT SNEAKING UP ON ME.
UM...
DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

I BET WE CAN RESOLVE THIS WITHOUT FURTHER VIOLENCE.
BUT I HAVE BEEN WRONG BEFORE.
I'M GLAD YOU SAID IT.
DAMN IT!
SORRY.
IT HAPPENS.
SON OF A--
TAP
HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR HUSBAND'S DEAD BODY YET?

@#$@#$!
@#$@#$!
SORRY.
IT HAPPENS.
HATE BEING MANHANDLED!
LISTEN, DIAMONDBACK, I WANT YOU TO--
I HAVE THEM ON RADAR. FOLLOW ME.
I DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD SUPER-POWERS.
I DIDN'T EITHER.
HE'S REALLY FAST.
I JUST FEEL IT'S MAKING US LOOK LIKE WE'RE GETTING OUR ASSES KICKED BY A NORMAL STRONG PERSON WHEN I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO AGREE THAT HE'S VERY FAST AND--

UH, SO, HOW'S THE RADAR THINGY OF YOURS?
THEY WERE RIGHT HERE.
I'M DYING TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THIS DIAMONDBACK GUY.
REALLY? AS FAR AS--
PTHFFT PTHFFT
AGH!
PTHFFT

TO BE CONTINUED...

DAREDEVIL, THE HERO I NEED

THE PULSE

By Joe Robertson, Editor in Chief

Designed By Manny Mederos
Art By Alex Maleev

New York City.

We are lousy with super heroes.

Every day, as editor in chief of one of the largest newspapers in the entire world, I receive voluminous updates on numerous super hero activities throughout the city, the country and the world.

So why can't I stop thinking about Daredevil?

There has been many a night--and I know so many of you will sympathize with this--that I have slept on the couch in my office because I looked outside my window to see the traffic backed up down Fifth Avenue for as far as the eye can see. On the far, far end of the miles-and-miles-long parade of cars, you can clearly see the firefight of super heroes stopping someone from doing something. I remind myself that whatever stopped traffic that bad was probably going to do something far worse if not for our citywide surplus of super-powers. No matter how you look at it, it's better to be sitting alive in your car (or couch) than dead and vaporized by Doctor Doom's death ray you didn't even see coming.

Then there's the little things: I have caught myself worrying about Spider-Man if he doesn't swing by my office at least twice a day.

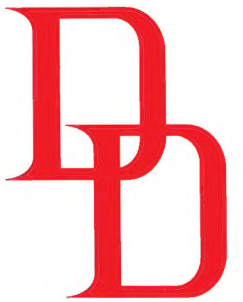
That is what it's like to live in New York City.

Every kind of super hero you can think of finds their way here. I don't know why. But 99 percent of them are here. The biggest question is why is 99 percent of the super-criminal activity is ALSO located here. Why are you here where all the super heroes live? We'll put a pin in that for another editorial.

But, with all this...why can't I stop thinking about Daredevil?

I keep asking myself: Why is there a man in a devil costume running around the shadows of Hell's Kitchen--even though I believe he is the only one that still calls it Hell's Kitchen? Why does every police blotter and eyewitness report that I have read about him seem go out of its way to point out Daredevil was "badly hurt" doing whatever he was doing?

Police and eyewitnesses all comment about the cuts and bruises and blood. If Daredevil has powers, they are certainly not in the Hulk/Thor/Thing category. He doesn't even seem close to the Spider-Man category. This very well may be an ordinary man dressed



as the devil going out every night doing whatever he can to scare the crap out of the bad people so the good people can get a good night's sleep.

Why do I keep thinking about Daredevil?

Because I wish I was him.

This city is a mess. This country is a mess. We are more divided now than we thought possible. And with that comes insulation. People stop enjoying going out. People stop enjoying interaction. People stay home. People make their own entertainment. We cower in fear and start resenting each other for it.

Except people like this Daredevil.

He goes out and makes the world a better place, and he doesn't seem to have much to back it up. Nothing but sheer force of will.

I wish that instead of sitting here wondering if I locked all the doors, I had the courage to stand outside my house and guard my neighbors. I wish my next-door neighbor, a fellow I'm quite fond of, had the courage to guard me as well. I wish we all had each other's backs. I wish all of us had the desire to bleed a little bit for our fellow person's well-being.

Arguments about vigilantism will never go away. There have been those who will take the law into their own hands for as long as there has been man and law. I decided to abandon the argument and instead focus my attention on admiring those worth admiring.

I sometimes wonder how many times my life has been saved by people like Daredevil without my ever even knowing. According to Chief of Crime Control Strategies Richard Cheek, criminal activity in that area of the city is at a historic low. Thank you to the police, thank you to the FBI, the agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., the EMTs and security guards, but I think some of us might owe Daredevil more thanks than we think.

Until the streets are safe and the local authorities finally get this city under peaceful control, until we can stand together and protect each other...

Thank you, Daredevil.

I wish I was you.

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A version of this editorial appears in print on April 20, on Page A22 of *The Daily Bugle*. Today's Paper | Subscribe

NEXT!

DEFENDERS #3

ALL ON SALE NEXT MONTH!

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LUKE CAGE #3

IRON FIST #5

DAREDEVIL #23